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ABSTRACT

A project examining the need for change in children's television environment and for the establishment of a grant-making organization designed to address the needs of the children's broadcasting environment consulted a variety of interests, insights, and divergent viewpoints. Research studies, government documents, books, professional journals, and popular magazine articles were consulted, and over 200 people were contacted, including commercial and public broadcasters, artists, distributors, advertisers, child psychologists, educators, federal agency spokespeople, legislators, and consumer advocates. Results indicate that change in the children's television environment is desired, as is a new grant-making service organization. It is also noted that although models presented for a national grant-making entity appear adequate, none are presently deemed feasible. Three recommendations call for (1) high priority of legislative activity related to children's television, (2) the establishment of a national council on children and television, and (3) the development of alternative distribution systems for children's programming, with special reference to cable channels. Appendices include project advisory board and team members, participants, Project Overview Conference participants, project method and description, footnotes, and a bibliography of works consulted. (CMV)

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TOWARD A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING

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Report on the Project to Ascertain the Feasibility of a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting

Funded by The John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, New York, New York

Project conducted and Report prepared by the

Center for Action Research

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Foreword

Scarcely thirty years ago, television was virtually unknown. Today it dominates the leisure hours of children and their parents. So all-pervasive is this phenomenon that, until recently, there has been an apparent inability to achieve thoughtful perspective.

Awareness is now growing, however, that children's immersion in this broadcasting environment profoundly shapes their sense of themselves and their awareness of the world. Television influences their hopes and expectations. Children assume that television reflects the world's sense of itself and its estimate of their potential.

Despite the presence of certain exemplary programs, few would contend that the average of more than 23 hours a week that children spend with television is time during which they are perceiving true images of the world. The diversity and richness of human experience, the frustrations, the failures, and the triumphs awaiting those whose reach exceeds their grasp—these are largely missing.

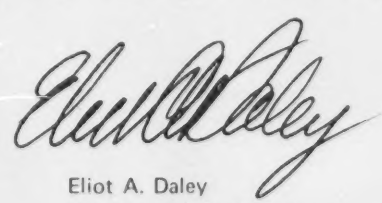
The prevailing characteristics of children's television—mass audience appeal and lowest common denominator programming—have been dictated by commercial cost-effectiveness constraints. Some way must be found for the future which frees children's television and radio programming from such a stranglehold. The system which has evolved, somewhat mindlessly, during the past thirty years need not limit our children's tomorrows. We can improve it for them.

Hence, the idea of a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting which could develop the overall vitality, sufficiency, and often unrealized potential of the children's broadcast environment. Whether this concept or another prevails is not important. What matters is that we do better.

In your hands is a summary of the results of a Study to ascertain the feasibility of such an Endowment. I am grateful to the staff and board of the Markle Foundation, and its President, Lloyd N. Morrisett, for their early recognition of the idea and their continuing generous support, both personal and financial, during the study.

I am permanently indebted to Dr. Nicholas B. Van Dyck, friend and colleague, for so masterfully planning and executing the Project. Beginning with little more than a discussion paper and a dream which I conveyed to him, he developed what many now regard as a model for future studies—a methodology which ensures that every issue is identified, every quarter heard from, and every datum and nuance brought into balance and perspective. From participants and staff alike, I hear constant expression of admiration for Dr. Van Dyck's management of this Study. Let this Foreword memorialize our appreciation.

This study is rigorously unbiased. But that does not mean that the recommendations are conveyed dispassionately. Time is running on. Children are growing. Opportunities are passing. Dreams die for lack of a second. Children look to us.



Eliot A. Daley
Chairman of the Board,
Center for Action Research

Preface and Acknowledgments

Building social and economic research into actionable policies and programs involves the architecture of human insight, technical competence, energy, and imagination. The Project to ascertain the feasibility of a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting has brought to the fore an impressive array of these talents from a broad spectrum of participants.

The concept for a national entity through which our society could focus its best efforts for children and broadcasting was nurtured in the mind of Eliot A. Daley by a decade of experience in children's television. This concept began to take shape in working papers and conversations held in early 1976.

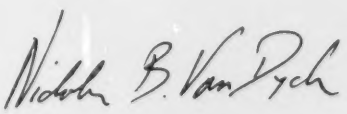
The basic materials for the feasibility study which ensued were provided by a wide variety of authors, researchers, and the often unsung heroes who prepare government reports. These materials are documented in the Bibliography. Two hundred and eighteen decision makers in relevant positions of professional responsibility were identified and interviewed over a period of nine months, from September, 1976 through May, 1977. In the light of their professional experience and knowledge of practical possibilities, these persons have arranged the building blocks of basic research. Their realism and vision have shaped the contours of this Report; their names are listed in Appendix C.

Project Advisory Board members, listed in Appendix A, have guided the process through consultations, the critical review of Interim Reports, and the assessment of recommendations from the Project Overview Conference held on April 28-29, 1977 in Washington, D.C. Conference participants, listed in Appendix D, focused their considerable talents on the complex task set forth in a Conference working document. Their critical refinement of Project findings shaped the thrust of this Report's recommendations. Subsequent interviews and consultations with members of the Project Advisory Board have given this Report and its recommendations their final definition.

I am particularly indebted to the members of the Project Team, listed in Appendix B. Their high level of skill, competence and dedication made possible the effective completion of the task we undertook ten months ago.

This Report is a summary of thousands of pages of literature and interview reports. While written for a general audience, care has been taken to include all the salient details uncovered by our research.

Those of you who have participated in the Project will find no surprises in the pages that follow. However, as you stand back and view the fruits of your labors, I hope you will share with the members of the Project Team the calm satisfaction of having helped to build inviting possibilities for children and their broadcasting environment.



Nicholas B. Van Dyck, Ph.D.
Project Director, and
President, Center for Action Research

August 1, 1977

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I. OVERVIEW: The Issue, The Project and The Findings

It is no secret that American children spend more of their early life watching television than in any other waking activity. This mass media environment has become an all-pervasive influence, shaping children's perceptions of reality and their imaginative capacities. Social and educational benefits and adverse consequences of this phenomenon are much researched and hotly debated. However, children's extraordinary devotion to television amounting to an aggregate of a billion hours per week, and the commercial acumen of advertisers who invested over $400 million for commercials to children last year, clearly indicate the power of the medium to influence children. While studies demonstrate that television has an impact on cognitive and emotional development, often little, or nothing, is done to monitor a child's viewing habits. Television, for the overwhelming majority of American children, is an integral part of their environment which is consumed with relatively little critical choice. Like the air around us, it is breathed day in and day out, regardless of its quality.

Some critics of the broadcasting environment assume that parents bear the responsibility of monitoring their children's viewing. Others maintain that this assumption is unrealistic and elitist. Most parents, they contend, have neither the time for nor the interest in the quality of television programming, and, for this reason, broadcasting standards should be a matter of public interest.

As this study will show, the state of the children's broadcasting environment and the issues of responsibility, change, and alternatives are the focus of wide-ranging private and government interest. Recognizing the need for a central organization through which our society can best focus its efforts for children and broadcasting, the Project's Executive Director raised the following question early in 1976: Would it be feasible to establish a national entity to develop the overall vitality, sufficiency, and often realized potential of the children's broadcasting environment? Subsequent conversations with people in the field indicated that the question deserved an answer, and funds were granted for a feasibility study. The working title for the proposed entity and the goal of the Project were summarized in the title of the Project brochure, "How About a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting?" Funded by the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, this study was conducted by the Center for Action Research from September 1, 1976 through June 30, 1977.

The Project Team spent nine months reading such diverse sources as research studies, government documents, books, professional journals and popular magazine articles. They interviewed and corresponded with over 200 people, among them, commercial broadcasters, public broadcasters, artists, distributors, advertisers, child psychologists, educators, federal agency spokespeople, legislators, and consumer advocates. This Report reflects the variety of interests, critical insights, and divergent points of view contained in the research data. It shows that there is a consensus among Project participants that change in the children's television environment is desirable, as is a grant-making organization designed to address the needs of the children's broadcasting environment. The findings reported also note that although the models for a national entity presented in this Report are considered adequate for the task, none are deemed feasible at this time.

These findings led to three Project recommendations, which, in summary, call for:

1. legislative activity to keep the rights of children in the broadcast environment at the forefront of current Congressional and regulatory debates,

2. the establishment of a prestigious private sector National Council on Children and Television, comprised of nationally recognized and personally committed persons who will lend their energy and influence to the task of ensuring that issues associated with children's life in the broadcast environment receive continuing attention at the highest levels of government and industry, and

3. the development of alternative distribution systems for children's programming, with special reference to cable channels.

II. THE CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING ENVIRONMENT: Description, Impact, and Economics

Description

The A. C. Nielsen Company estimates that 97% of American homes have at least one television set. Viewing statistics for families show them watching, on a weekly average, network programs for 38 hours, independent stations for 26 hours, and public television for 58 minutes. Children between the ages of 2 and 11 watch an average of more than 23 hours each week.

By the time an American child enters kindergarten, he or she has spent more hours with television than it would take to earn a four year college degree. The viewing average of more than 23 hours a week continues through the teen years so that by the time the average American reaches eighteen, he or she has devoted more time to television than to any other activity except for sleep. The average American high school graduate has spent under 13,000 hours attending school and over 18,000 hours watching television.

Time devoted to television is only half the picture of the children's broadcasting environment. What is watched is of equal interest. Looking at the figures it becomes clear that of the 1200 hours of television annually watched by 2-11 year olds, roughly half could possibly be spent watching programs designed for them. The National Television Institute reports that in 1976 commercial network prime time programming, designed for general adult audiences (Monday through Sunday from 7 to 11 p.m.) accounted for 42% of the viewing done by 2-5 year olds, and 59% of the viewing of the 6-11 age group.

To a significant degree, pre-school children are guided to, or seek out programs produced especially for them, such as *Captain Kangaroo, Sesame Street,* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.* These programs are produced with the specific intent of contributing to the cognitive and/or emotional development of young children. Most study participants agreed that they represent a good, though limited example of what successful television for pre-school children can do. Some programs for older children such as *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* which teaches pro-social themes and *Zoom* which involves the creative participation of children on camera are viewed as examples of constructive and successful programming for school age children. The ABC *After-school Specials* and NBC's *Special Treats* have more recently brightened the weekday afternoon

schedules. Unfortunately, some of the other quality network programs such as *Animals, Animals, Animals,* and the *CBS Festival of Lively Arts for Young People* are run at off hours when few children see them.

The data indicates that by the time most children reach school age they prefer to watch programs designed for the 18-49 year old market. According to the A. C. Nielsen Company, only one program designed for them, *The Wonderful World of Disney,* appears in the top fifteen programs watched by children in the 6-11 age group. This program, it shoud be noted, occupies a popular time slot. It can be said, in conclusion, that the major portion of the child's broadcast environment consists of adult programming.

Impact

There is an assumption on the part of some broadcasters and advertisers interviewed that television is nothing more than benign entertainment experience. The research literature, however, demonstrates that programming has a profound impact on development, leading professionals like Dr. George Gerbner to conclude that television is "our chief instrument of socialization and enculturation."[1]

The *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* study by Michael Cosgrove and Curtis W. MacIntyre is a case-in-point. A test group of twenty-one 3-6 year olds were shown five programs which contained three pro-social themes—restitution, sharing, and empathy. A control group of twenty-two nursery school children did not see the programs. The observation of subsequent behavior indicated the beneficial impact of viewing on the test group.[2]

In another investigation conducted by the Educational Testing Service, the impact of *The Electric Company* was observed on 8,000 of its 6.5 million viewers. It was learned that children who watch the program make significant gains over non-viewers in the reading skills the program is designed to teach.[3]

In still another study, the C.B.S. Office of Social Research found that "Close to nine out of ten children who had seen an episode of *Fat Albert* received one or more messages of social value."[4]

However, the children's television environment is dominated by programming—both for children and adults—which studies show often engender skewed perceptions of the world and stimulate anti-social behavior. In a recent paper published by the Rand Corporation, George Comstock reviewed and summarized research on television violence. He concludes that, "Violent television entertainment increases the probability of subsequent aggressive behavior on the part of children and youth."[5] In a recent article Dr. George Gerbner notes that 65% of the leading characters on television (85% in children's shows) are involved in some violent activity.[6]

Dr. Michael Rothenberg states in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that "There is an average of six times more violence during one hour of children's television than there is in one hour of adult television." He goes on to point out that televised violence does not have a cathartic effect, as some maintain. It, in fact, has the opposite effect; that is, it increases

the viewer's subsequent aggressiveness. "There is," he says, "a decreased emotional sensitivity to media violence, as a result of the repetition of violence in the mass media," and, "an increased ability to be violent with others."[7]

Leonard Eron, in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* reached a similar conclusion and makes still another point. One of the best predictors of how aggressive a boy will be at age 19 is the level of violence on television programs he prefers at age 8. This suggests to Eron that the impact of repeated viewing of televised violence may be extremely long-lived.[8]

The research findings are similar in studies regarding the influence on children of televised sex stereotyping, ethnic stereotyping, and a variety of skewed perceptions of reality. Clearly, children are being significantly influenced by television. Indeed, their cognitive and emotional development is being shaped by their broadcast environment. There is no question that television is having a significant impact. As Nicholas Johnson has stated, "All television is educational television. The question is: What is it teaching?"

With this thought in mind, let us shift our attention to the economics of the broadcast industry.

Economics of Commercial Broadcasting

The important question in light of the impact of television on children is: What priorities determine programming? In 1949, 42% of all children's programming was carried without advertising on a sustaining basis. By and large, these programs were directed at specific age groups rather than homogenized mass audiences.

Today, however, the commercial broadcast industry is ruled by ratings, a fact that profoundly influences the content of programming children watch. The bottom line of the industry is advertising revenue which is earned on the basis of ratings. The number of viewers determines the price charged per advertising minute. However, children are not prime consumers, and, as a result, a prime-time adult program advertising minute can sell for $100,000 compared to $12,000 for a minute in traditional children's viewing blocks. Therefore, the available funds to produce children's programs are but a small fraction of the budgets for adult shows. In the words of Geoffrey Cowan, addressing a Children and Advertising Seminar at Georgetown University Law Center, "the present system of advertiser-based commercial television conspires, unintentionally, against programming aimed at young children."[9]

Working to reach the largest possible audiences, broadcasters develop programs which have the broadest appeal across all ages, but particularly for the 18 to 49 year old market. Age-specific children's programming, be it for preschoolers, the 6-11 year olds or the early teens, which can be most successful in terms of parent appreciation, the percentage of the target audience reached, and positive impact on behavior and attitudes, is not profitable in terms of the ratings. Herein is the dilemma confronting commercial broadcasters concerned with children's broadcasting.

This is not the problem at the Public Broadcasting Service which, in the minds of many study participants, has been a national showcase for quality children's programming. CPB/PBS set a standard for children's television by developing programs for carefully targeted, numerically limited audiences. The success of such programs as *Sesame Street, Electric Company* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* helped build the system's reputation. By many measures—beneficial effects, percentage of target audience reached, and appreciation by parents—such programs can be viewed as eminently successful. Such programs could not be supported commercially, nor would they survive if audience size dominated priorities. Yet, even Public Broadcasting's children's programming now mainly consists of reruns because of budget limitations and new priorities.

Officials at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service state that children's programming is not a high priority. Most of the money for their children's programs has come either from the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare or from corporations and foundations. In fiscal 1976, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting expended, at its own discretion, $7.3 million on all phases of program production and promotion. Of this amount, $16,000 or .002%, was spent on new children's programming. (PBS's Station Program Cooperative received $7.3 million from station funds, $4.6 million from the Ford Foundation, and $4.6 million from CPB. Of this $16.5 million, $4.479 million, or 27% was spent on the continuation of children's programming, i.e. *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, Sesame Street* and *Electric Company*.)[10]

It is also worth noting that the National Endowment for the Arts has all but ignored the funding of children's programming. During the past two fiscal years, it has allocated only .0009% of its grants in this area.[11] A similar situation exists for the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is perhaps significant that the index to the *Cultural Directory: Guide to Federal Funds and Services for Cultural Activities,* does not include a category for children.

The exception to this picture of public funding is the Office of Education. Last year through its Special Projects Branch and a program set up under the Emergency School Aid Act, programs such as *Sesame Street* and those intended to create better understanding among ethnic groups—*Rehop, Carascolendas, Villa Alegre,* and *Vegetable Soup*—were funded. Some have found distribution outlets, others, however, remain on the shelves because of limited distribution alternatives, inadequate promotion, and program concepts of limited appeal for out-of-school entertainment viewing.

Furthermore, rigid program guidelines and a complicated and expensive application process discourage many potential producers from applying for Office of Education grants. Some interviewees have also questioned the wisdom of devoting such a large federal expenditure ($12 million in 1976) to one type of "purposive" programming without regard for all the other many and varied needs and interests of children.

This overview of children's viewing and the broadcast industry reflects the consensus of Project participants who concurred that children are profoundly influenced by television, both in positive and negative ways. There was general consensus that programming for children should

offer far more variety of technique, format, and content; it should be entertaining, to meet out-of-school viewing expectations; it should be age-specific; programs should reinforce creative activity, pro-social attitudes, and an appreciation of cultural diversity; programs should positively explore the full range of emotions and role models; and programs should stimulate cognitive abilities. Furthermore, changes and/or alternatives in programming are necessary to improve the picture of the current children's broadcasting environment. It was agreed, however, that such initiatives for children do not appear to be forthcoming from either commercial or public broadcasting channels. The question is: Who will fund new alternatives?

III. WINDS OF CHANGE: Technology, Consumer Unrest, Legal Issues and Legislation

The year 1977 marks a moment in history when a variety of forces indicate there are changes that might affect the future children's broadcasting environment. The issue today, at its root, appears to be economic. The following outline of new distribution technologies, consumer unrest, and current legal issues and pending legislation, will examine the winds of change blowing over this terrain.

Distribution Technology

It is technologically possible that, within the next ten years, satellites, computers, lasers, and television technology, including the potential of multi-channel cable, will be integrated into systems serving most households in the United States. A principal effect of this development will be vastly increased distribution alternatives. The piece in the puzzle which is bringing these disparate technologies into a single interacting communication network is the fiber optic light guide. The light guide, a thread of highly refined quartz which permits a great many signals to be transmitted along its length by a pulsating light beam, will replace the heavier, "noiser" copper wires with their more limited capacity. It has been estimated that the cost of rewiring or "threading" the United States could be borne by the cost of recycling the copper obtained from the old lines.

Satellites already provide the interconnection between cable systems and telecasting stations. We are also on the threshold of the video disc and its potential for children's programming. In addition, the transition to light guides will permit home and school use of computer terminals equipped to call up a wide variety of library-stored video materials, like a vast TV juke box. Furthermore, interactive video communications open up many possibilities for two-way educational and entertainment uses of the medium. Experiments on this front are already being carried out by Warner Communications in Columbus, Ohio.

In short, technological advances now permit the development of a vastly multiplied number of distribution channels. The resulting smaller, more specialized, and fragmented audiences would substantially alter the economics of television production and distribution. New distribution alternatives for small-audience programming will require product. Given the current economic priorities of the industry, one can assume that broadcasters will not find it profitable

to create, for example, an age-specific children's cable show. The need for a funding entity, therefore, could be essential in the near future.

Consumer Unrest

With the emerging possibilities in distribution technology, there is a growing concern for the quality of existing programming. Citizens' groups and professional organizations such as Action for Children's Television, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the American Medical Association, and the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting are currently speaking out against current programming and advertising practices with regard to children. For example, Action for Children's Television can be credited with bringing pressure to bear to reduce the number of advertising minutes on children's weekend programming by 40%, the minutes per hour of weekday advertising to children by 25%, the elimination of vitamin pill advertising, and the elimination of host selling on children's programs. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers has gained the ear of the public through its recent series of public hearings on television violence.

Legal Issues and Legislation

It is possible that in the future the law will protect the needs of children over the broadcaster's ratings. In a decision that sheds a new light on First Amendment rights, Judge Warren Ferguson of the U.S. District Court of California declared in the "Family Viewing" case, "It may be that the rights of children to diversity of programming may have been so severely ignored . . . that affirmative requirements that broadcasters meet their needs in the times when children most frequently watch television could be constitutionally supported in a properly prepared administrative record." His is not the final word from the courts but this decision questions the right of broadcasters under the First Amendment to freely prescribe all that is sent out over the airwaves without regard for the needs of children.

These winds of change are viewed by some as the gathering storm. The regulation of the broadcast industry is governed by the 1934 Communications Act. This year, the House Communications Subcommittee has embarked on an extensive review of that Act. The options posed to date indicate that a wide variety of broadcast practices is being seriously considered for revision. At this moment, the place of children's rights and the future of their broadcast environment is an open question.

Also, as this Report is distributed, the Office of Telecommunications Policy is evaluating the government's role in broadcasting with an eye toward the rationalization and consolidation of various federal programs. Here too, the rights of children and the future of their broadcasting environment could receive the support of much needed initiatives on the part of the Executive Branch.

In still another area of broadcast regulation, Marjorie Steinberg in the *UCLA Law Review* discusses "a seemingly Utopian solution (which) lies within the power of the FCC under its present statutory grant of power:

> Section 303(c) of the Communications Act provides the FCC with the authority to allocate the electromagnetic spectrum among stations . . . Unlike the earlier allocations, however, this allocation would set aside *hours* rather than frequencies for the presentation of noncommercial childrens' programming. Present licensees would have their licenses renewed for their assigned frequency, only for twenty-two or twenty-three hours per day. The other hour or two of frequency use could be granted to a different licensee such as the school board or a group of educators or parents . . .
>
> (P)rivate grants and governmental subsidy could establish a Children's Television Network which could send shows to the individual licensees. Groups like Children Television Workshop could also be funded both by the government and private groups to produce shows for children.[12]

At the present time, the question of children's broadcast rights and the future of their broadcasting environment is uncertain. It is a lively concern of many Project interviewees as well as an issue before the public and the federal government. If the law is effectively changed to require that broadcasters meet children's needs, as Judge Ferguson suggests, or if federal agencies decide upon regulation to safeguard the rights of children in the broadcast environment, there will be a need for new programming and the funding of such programming. Like the possibilities inherent in the development of new distribution outlets, a change in the law could result in more appropriate programming for children.

It is the consensus of the participants in this study that the present state of the children's broadcasting environment, the economic priorities of the broadcast industry and the future possibilities of children's programming give rise to the need for a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting.*

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* The title for the proposed entity, National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting, stresses the importance of developing the full range of commercial and public distribution alternatives, including cable and video disc. Hence, the term "broadcasting" is used in its general sense to include all distribution technologies.

IV. THE SHAPE OF A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING SUGGESTED BY PROJECT RESEARCH

Guidelines

There was substantial consensus on the guidelines for a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting among the Project participants and in the literature reviewed. They are as follows:

1. Maintain and nurture the ongoing recognition, on a national scale, that (for better or worse) the broadcast environment now constitutes a pervasive experience for the overwhelming majority of American children. The Endowment would furthermore be charged with the responsibility of fostering appropriate responses to that fact.

2. Develop the widest possible children's audiences for Endowment-underwritten programming by supporting, in the first instance, alternative distribution systems. These might include cable, public broadcasting, and syndicated distribution on independent stations and affiliates.

3. Provide adequate promotion money for programs in order to develop children's audiences.

4. Encourage and support a diversity of concepts, formats, and techniques characterized by, but not limited, to:

   . . . an appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity,

   . . . age-specific programming,

   . . . avoidance of unfair stereotyping of racial groups, women, men, role models, families, and the broader social environment,

   . . . an appreciation of children's feelings and conceptual capacities through the exercise of age-appropriate artistic sensitivity and dramatic integrity in the portrayal of conflict, violence, humor, sexual relationships, joy, fantasy, and fun.

5. Encourage and support the development of experimental children's programming which explores the full range of children's active participation in broadcast media; e.g. interactive programs, intergenerational programs, and children's participation in the development of concepts, formats and techniques.

6. Encourage and support the further development of radio as a popular broadcast medium for children.

7. Encourage the recognition and development of the finest proven and emergent talent in children's broadcasting.

8. Encourage and support responsiveness to cultural and regional diversity by including grants to women, Blacks, Hispanics and other members of groups which are not proportionately represented in the writing and production of children's programming.

9. Encourage and support the translation and dissemination of research on children and media to broadcast policy makers, producers, educational institutions, and other targeted constituencies.

10. Encourage and support the development of critical capacities among children, parents, educators, researchers, writers, producers, and broadcasters, regarding broadcast media.

Activities

There was substantial consensus among Project participants that a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting should provide grants to artists, writers, and producers of children's radio and television programs for:

1. development of experimental techniques, concepts, and formats,

2. program research and development through treatment and script,

3. pilot production and formative research,

4. full production of "specials", series, drop-in segments, and public service announcements with funds designated for formative and (external) summative research,

5. program promotion, and

6. design, development, and dissemination of program-related, non-broadcast materials.

The Endowment would provide up to a designated percentage of the total costs of a program, including money budgeted for promotion. Programs to be aired on the Public Broadcasting Service would receive the balance of their funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or corporate and foundation underwriting. Programs distributed on public service cable channels would receive the balance of their funding from the government, tax-exempt industry contributions

and foundations. Programs to be aired by commercial broadcasters with advertising would receive the balance of funds from advertisers, broadcasters, or syndicators. In each case, the funding of programs would involve a financial commitment on the part of potential delivery systems.

A portion of the overall Endowment budget would be allocated to the full funding of the following activities:

1. public education about children and their broadcasting environment utilizing various media directed at target audiences of parents, teachers, children, the medical profession, producers, artists, writers, broadcasters, advertisers, and researchers. Public education efforts could also involve the funding of institutes, seminars, and conferences.

2. research on children and their broadcasting environment, including the translation of research findings into a form usable by lay audiences and the targeted dissemination of such research reports.

The foregoing activities have been endorsed by an overwhelming majority of interviewees as being both desirable and important in light of the present state of children's broadcasting. None of the foregoing activities would be "in-house" functions of the Endowment. The Endowment would limit its task to the granting of funds to individuals and organizations to carry forward the activities suggested.

A variety of models were explored and developed to meet the consensus on "Guidelines" and "Activities". These include the subsuming of the Endowment functions under an existing agency such as the National Endowment for the Arts or the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In addition, four freestanding models were tested. The essential difference between them was funding. Respondents to a Project survey were asked to rate each model in terms of adequacy, appropriateness, and feasibility in relation to the "Guidelines" and "Activities". The model viewed as most adequate (scoring 9.4 out of a possible 10) was a full scope-federally funded model. A second model, also federally funded, required a much lower federal budget for limited targets. A privately funded model was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by a majority of participants at the Project Overview Conference held in April, 1977. However, subsequent interviews with potential private funding sources indicated that only modest seed monies could be anticipated; hence, in the last analysis, federal funding would be necessary. A jointly (public/private) funded model was also considered, but again the severe limitation on long-term private funds indicated the necessity of public funding. The chart on the following page outlines the shape of the four above-considered models.

The following paragraphs describe the funding and structure of the full scope-federally funded model, which was viewed as most *adequate* by Project participants.

Potentially Feasible Models

	Model A Full Scope - Publicly Funded	Model B Limited Scope - Publicly Funded	Model C Limited Scope - Privately Funded	Model D Limited Scope - Public/Private Funds
Structure:	Private, non-profit	(same as A)	(same as A)	(same as A)
Primary Funding:	Congress	(same as A)	Advertisers, Broadcasters	Congress/ Corporation match formula
Secondary Funding:	State and local public and private sources	(same as A)	Foundations, Popular subscription	State and local public and private via State Councils
Activities:	Full Grants for 1. public education 2. pre-service trng. 3. in-service trng. 4. institutes, etc. 5. research	(same as A)	(same as A)	(same as A)
	Supplementary Grants for 1. experimental techniques, etc. 2. R and D* through treatment and script 3. pilot 4. full production 5. promotion 6. continuation	(Activities 1-3 only)	(Activities 1-3 only)	(Activities 1-3 only)
Distribution of Programs:	Producer/Other Funder Responsibility, etc. 1. Public broadcasters, first refusal for PBS, broadcasters pay producers for all rights and royalties 2. Commercial broadcasting, sustaining 3. Commercial air, institutional advertisers pay for time	Pilots used by producers to sell to full production funders Arranged by producers, distributors, broadcasters	(same as B) (same as B)	(same as B) (same as B)
Rights:	Producer owned	(same as A)	(same as A)	(same as A)
Royalties, Residuals, and Profits:	Producer payout, Profits shared with NECB	(same as A)	(same as A)	(same as A)
Estimated Annual Targets:	20,000 T/R** days 200 hours TV 200 hours radio	20,000 T/R days 20 radio scripts 40 TV scripts 10 radio pilots 50 TV pilots	8,000 T/R days 10 radio scripts 20 RV scripts 5 radio pilots 25 TV pilots	20,000 T/R days 20 radio scripts 40 TV scripts 10 radio pilots 50 TV pilots
Estimated Annual Budget:	Ed. & Research 5M Production & Promotion 32M Administration 3M 40M	Ed. & Research 5M Scripts & Pilots 15M Administration 3M 23M	Ed. & Research 2 M Scripts & Pilots 7.5 Administration 2.5 12M	Ed. & Research 5M Scripts & Pilots 15M Administration 3M 23M

* Research and Development
** Training and/or Research

The Model Rated Most Adequate: Funding, Structure and Costs

The most adequate model for a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting is a federally funded, private, nonprofit corporation exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the IRS Code. Repeatedly, interviewees within federal agencies and in the private sector stressed the desirability of locating the Endowment outside the formal structure of the federal government. The reasons offered included the issue of appropriate insulation of producers, artists, writers, and in turn broadcasters and children, from Congressional pressure regarding program content. Furthermore, it was stated on frequent occasions that an Endowment would be well advised to keep grantees one step removed from the complexities and costliness of compliance with funding guidelines and restrictions which apply in the case of federal agencies.

The federal support for such an entity would, of necessity, issue from Congressional authorization and appropriation. It was also suggested by many interviewees that these funds not be tied on a matching basis to foundation grants or corporate contributions. These other funding sources would come into play on a program by program basis as described on pages 12 and 13.

Distribution of Programs

The distribution of programs would be dictated by the source of supplementary funding in each case (see pages 12 and 13).

Rights

Producer grantees would own the programs and control rights for all domestic and foreign broadcast and non-broadcast distribution.

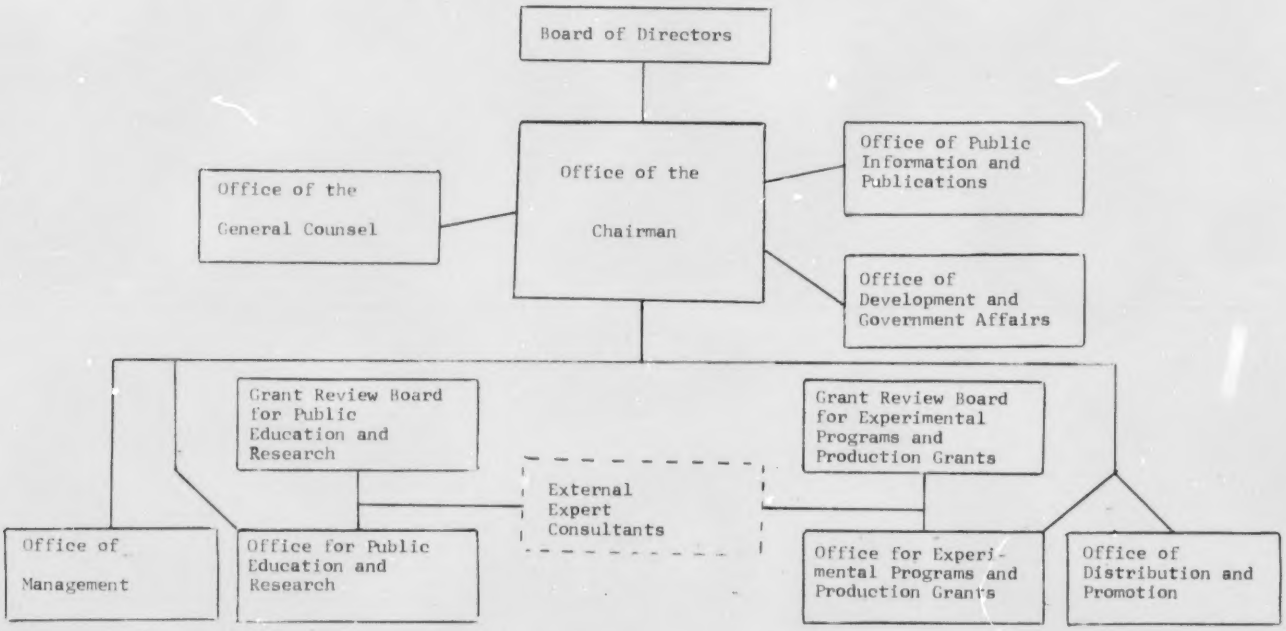
Royalties, Residuals, and Profits

Producer grantees would be responsible for the payment of all royalties and residuals. Profits would be distributed according to prearranged formulae designed to provide continuing financial incentives to the producer while permitting the reimbursement of the Endowment up to the level of its investment, should a program prove to be profitable in the case of commercial distribution.

Organization

The general table of organization (shown on the next page) suggests an adequate yet lean structure, and illustrates recommended functions and relationships within a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting.

General Table of Organization


Board of Directors
Office of the Chairman
Office of the General Counsel
Office of Public Information and Publications
Office of Development and Government Affairs
Grant Review Board for Public Education and Research
Grant Review Board for Experimental Programs and Production Grants
External Expert Consultants
Office of Management
Office for Public Education and Research
Office for Experimental Programs and Production Grants
Office of Distribution and Promotion

A Board of Directors of 15 members, appointed by the President with Senate approval, would determine policy, excluding program content and grant determinations.

Two Grant Review Boards, of six to nine members each, selected by Endowment staff from, and in consultation with, relevant (including grass root) constituencies, would receive proposals from their respective Grants Office Directors, and make selection recommendations to the Chairman by way of a Grants Office Director. External and anonymous expert consultants could file advisory comments as appendices to proposals transmitted to the Grant Review Boards. Where contracts are involved instead of grants, e.g. for training and public education, the appropriate Grant Review Board would also forward their selection recommendations.

Targets and Costs

The National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting would fund many kinds of radio and television programs for children in prime-time slots or in traditional children's time blocks. The Endowment would be free to address children's needs on commercial broadcasting, public broadcasting, or cable channels. The targets and costs projected below are modest in relation to the number of hours (1200) that the average child watches television each year. The needs were weighed against the costs to arrive at the following optimal objectives:

1. An optimal annual target of 20 000 person/days involved in research, public education, and training activities would cost an estimated $5 million.

2. An optimal annual target of 200 hours of children's television programming, including promotion, and 200 hours of children's radio programming, (based upon a 50% level of Endowment investment), would cost an estimated $32 million.

3. Annual administrative costs for the above mentioned level of funding activities, based upon the organizational structure described, is projected at $3 million.

The total annual cost of an operational Endowment with these targets would, therefore, be $40 million.

V. WHY A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR CHILDREN'S BROADCASTING DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE FEASIBLE AT THIS TIME

The stated intent of this feasibility study was to explore the possibility of establishing a national entity for children's broadcasting. The need for such an organization has been established as has the consensus on its "Guidelines" and "Activities". As was discussed in Chapter IV, all possible models for an Endowment were considered, but none was deemed feasible at this time. The following is a presentation of the criticisms of the various models.

Criticisms of the Full Scope-Federally Funded Model

The concept of a federally funded Endowment raised a number of criticisms including implied governmental control of content. Citing the First Amendment, a number of commercial broadcasters voiced the criticism that a federally funded entity would involve, at least implicitly, government control of the content of programming for children. This concern was compounded by the demonstrated vulnerability of children to the influences of television. Therefore, in spite of the proposed structural insulation to protect children and broadcasters from government decision makers, the fact of federal funding, in the opinion of these critics, smacked of mind-control.

These same critics were not comforted by the history of such federally funded entities as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment fot the Humanities. They pointed to continuing pressure from Congress to underwrite, or not underwrite, certain kinds of programming.

Other critics were afraid that the proposed Endowment would dominate the funding of federally supported children's programming. The diversity of present funding sources within the federal government was seen as a positive factor. "I am concerned," said an interviewee from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, "about the 'single gate-keeper' implied in any centralized concept."[13]

In a similar vein, some producers as well as federal agency people speculated that a federally funded Endowment, in spite of its proposed small and lean "foundation" structure, would become

insensitive to the various publics it must serve and unmindful of its original objectives. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service were severely criticized on these counts by interviewees representing the concerns of minorities, women, and "public access." A federally funded entity, they believe, would go the same way. "It is the nature of the beast."

Criticism of Placing the Endowment Within an Existing Federal Agency

White House spokesmen and some Federal agency people pointed out that while no agency currently does the proposed work of an Endowment for children's broadcasting, several others do parts of it. Furthermore, one or more of the existing federally funded entities might have its scope and/or charter amended to encompass most of the functions suggested for a federally funded National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting.

For example:

1. The functions of such an entity might be accomplished by the National Endowment for the Arts, either by a semi-independent division (such as the American Film Institute), or an expansion of the NEA's own Media Arts: Film/Radio/Television program. The rationale for this position includes the fact that the NEA has a broad cultural mandate and in the minds of some, placing the functions of an Endowment for Children's Broadcasting within the NEA would underscore the contention that television is an art form more than anything else. However, as has been noted above, interviewees at the NEA have been the first to recognize that children's programming has not, and in all probability will not, command a position of significant priority within the National Endowment for the Arts.

2. Another possible locus suggested was the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. This Office could provide an active vehicle for the further development of children's programming. At the present time, it was noted, the Office of Education, by virtue of its ESAA programming and Special Projects Branch, is the largest single non-commercial underwriter of children's programming in the United States. However, interviewees within the Office of Education underscored the constraints surrounding ESAA grants for "purposive" programs as well as restrictive disbursement guidelines which preclude access by many would-be producers. Furthermore, some of these same interviewees applauded the concept of a separate entity for children's broadcasting, and strongly recommended that it be located outside the Office of Education and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.[14]

3. Legislative staff, and an Office of Telecommunications Policy spokesman, proposed that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Service would be logical candidates to assume the functions of the proposed Endowment. Proponents of this view pointed out that Endowment supported programming if aired on PBS or carried on a public service basis by commercial channels would be virtually *pro bono publico* programming. As such, it would fall into the same camp as "public" broadcasting, even though the programs might not be seen exclusively on non-commercial channels. It would be

within the realm of possibility, these interviewees pointed out, to amend the charter of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to include a responsibility for the production and distribution of children's programming for both public and commercial carriers. However, spokesmen from within the Corporation for Public Broadcasting have voiced considerable doubt as to the possibility of such a revised mandate. The alternative suggested by some public broadcasting people was that an appropriation of major magnitude to CPB/PBS, exclusively earmarked for children's programs, would provide much of the desired programming and attract a sizable proportion of the children's audiences to non-commercial channels. No one interviewed, however, voiced the probability of such a new major appropriation to CPB/PBS.

Criticism on yet another front came from a White House spokesman who pointed out that the idea of creating a new federally funded program runs counter to the Carter administration's stated intent to reduce the size of the federal bureaucracy and to rationalize and consolidate federal funding of broadcast program activities. This same White House spokesman suggested that housing the functions of a children's broadcasting entity within an existing agency would be preferable to creating a new one.[15]

Still another criticism of the federally funded Endowment concept came from citizens' group spokespeople who stated that the obligation to provide programming of sufficient quality and variety rests with broadcast licensees. These interviewees pointed out that the industry is seriously delinquent in meeting its responsibilities; therefore, it is not the task of taxpayers to remedy present shortcomings.

And finally there was the often heard criticism of federal funding on the grounds that it would inevitably lead to unjust enrichment of an already profitable broadcast industry. Furthermore, it was observed that the business of this industry is conducted on public property—the airwaves. Therefore, many contended that it would be particularly inappropriate for publicly funded programming to even indirectly support commercial broadcasters.

Criticism of Private Funding

Some advertisers and broadcasters were of the opinion that program content would be governed by the corporate underwriters of a privately funded endowment. These underwriters, they believed, would be committed to the largest possible audiences like commercial broadcasters. The result, as they see it, would be a continuation of the mass mediocrity in much of children's programming.

The major criticism of non-public funding of the proposed Endowment, as stated above, was the problem of continued funding at adequate levels. At best, many critics said, heavy reliance would have to be placed on a variety of sources including advertisers, corporate contributions, popular subscription, and in the last analysis, federal sources as well.

One criticism of all the models was that of limited access to distribution channels. The research indicates that in the near future there will be limited programming time for children's

television on the public broadcasting channels and little or no network time available for programming produced outside the networks themselves. (Independent stations, and to a lesser extent, commercial affiliates, offer future possibilities for participation in syndicated "children's television networks". Particular interest was expressed in the possibility of distribution on cable systems.) However, without adequate current distribution outlets, some critics argue, it doesn't make sense to set up an Endowment to fund children's programming at this time.

All of the above criticisms contribute to this Report's conclusion that the establishment of a National Endowment for Children's Television is not considered feasible under present circumstances.

VI. PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

A. In conclusion, this Project has ascertained that the needs of children and the children's broadcasting environment call for alternatives to the present systems of program development, funding, and distribution. Furthermore, more research and public education on the subject of children and television are essential. The Project has also ascertained that neither a federally nor a privately funded National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting, an entity which could meet the above needs, is viewed by the majority of Project participants as economically or politically feasible at this time. The introduction of legislation to create such an Endowment would nevertheless serve multiple important purposes including:

1. the deliberation of the issues at the highest possible level of national debate,

2. the recognition, maintenance and nurture of a critical mass of existing individual and organizational concern,

3. the calling to account of public and commercial broadcasters, and those federal entities whose charters include explicit or implicit responsibilities for the children's broadcasting environment, and

4. the possible enactment of legislation for a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting and the appropriation of funding required.

Therefore, **the introduction of legislation to create a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting and the ensuing process of deliberation is recommended.**

B. There also exists a need for a prestigious private sector National Council for Children and Television, comprised of nationally recognized and personally committed persons who will lend their energy and influence to:

1. ensure that the issues associated with children's life in the broadcasting environment receive continuing attention at the highest levels of government, education and industry,

2. encourage public and private sector interests to be fully responsive to potential children's broadcasting activities which fall within their sphere of responsibility,

3. maintain a presence in the legislative process to ensure that adequate provision is made for identifying and designating funds for children's programming in order that such funds not become lost in the welter of bureaucratic in-fighting, and

4. serve as an ongoing interest group which could support reintroduction (if necessary) of Endowment legislation, or other legislation which would accomplish the over-riding purposes of enhancing children's life in their broadcast environment.

Therefore, **the establishment of a National Council for Children and Television is recommended.**

C. The urgent need for new distribution channels is underscored by the fact that limited access for children's programming is foreseen on public broadcasting channels and virtually no network access is anticipated for programs funded and produced outside the networks. Thus, a timely opportunity exists for a feasibility study leading to a demonstration project which could offer:

1. programming alternatives for children on a commercial-free public service basis utilizing independent stations and/or basic (not pay) services of cable systems, and

2. established precedents for public service children's programming as distribution technology develops.

Therefore, **the development of alternative distribution systems for children's programming (in the first instance involving cable systems) is recommended.**

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The following persons were interviewed by members of the Project Team between September, 1976 and May, 1977. It goes without saying that divergent points have been aired. The responsibility for the content of this Report rests solely with the Center for Action Research Project Team whose declared intent is to present a balanced, non-partisan exposition of the data.

Many people have responded most helpfully to our request for documents and research reports. Their cooperation is greatly appreciated even though their names do not appear below.

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(1) Correspondence Only
(2) Pre-Project Interviews Only

Appendix D: Project Overview Conference Participants

The following people participated in the Project Overview Conference on April 28, 1977, in Washington, D.C.

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Ms. Peggy Charren, President
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Appendix E: Project Method and Description

Action research engages decision makers in the assessment of information pertinent to their professional responsibilities. The objectives of this process are to refine research in the light of practical possibilities and to test hypotheses with an eye toward the development of ways and means to meet demonstrated needs. Published research reports comprise the basic materials which action research then shapes into feasible alternatives for policies, programs, structures, and services. The sculptors in this process include the key decision makers in the field under study. These people effectually become co-authors, with the action research team, of the outcome of any given project.

In the Project to ascertain the feasibility of a National Endowment for Children's Broadcasting, participants included leaders in commercial broadcasting, public broadcasting, writing, production, distribution, public legislation, research, child development, citizens' groups, and professional guilds and associations.

A summary description of this Study will serve to illustrate the way in which this method has been put into practice. Following the acceptance of the Proposal for funding, a Project Design was developed by members of the Project Team. The process then included:

. . . a review of published research findings and literature in the field of children and broadcasting.

. . . a review of legislation, charters, by-laws, and contracts relating to the functions and structures of the existing National Endowments, federal agencies, private foundations, and broadcasting corporations.

. . . preliminary discussions with representatives from the constituencies named above.

. . . a first round of interviews, guided by specific objectives and an interview protocol, each documented by an interview report.

. . . selection of Project Advisory Board members whose responsibilities included; the representation of the full spectrum of interests and viewpoints, serving as contact persons, access for periodic consultation, review of Interim Reports, and participation in the Project Overview Conference on April 27–28th, 1977.

. . . drafting and distribution of a First Interim Report (January, 1977).

. . . critique and documented feedback on the First Interim Report by interviewees to date.

. . . a second round of interviews.

. . . a Second Interim Report (April, 1977) was drafted on the basis of new data developed.

. . . critique and documented feedback on the Second Interim Report by interviewees.

. . . a Project Overview Conference for the purpose of reviewing and refining the Second Interim Report and shaping recommendations.

. . . a Project Advisory Board conference/consultation to refine conference recommendations.

. . . distribution of this Report, including the actionable Recommendations set forth.

Appendix F: Footnotes

[1]George Gerbner, "Measuring the Climate of Fear," *American Medical News,* (December 13, 1976).

[2]Michael Cosgrove and Curtis W. Macintyre, "The Influence of 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' on Nursery School Children's Pro-Social Behavior," paper presented at the Annual Southeastern Conference for the Society for Research and Child Development.

[3]Joan Ganz Cooney, *Children's Television Workshop Progress Report.* (New York: Children's Television Workshop, 1974).

[4]CBS/Broadcast Group, *Learning While They Laugh: Studies of Five Children's Programs on the CBS Television Network.* (New York: CBS/Broadcast Group, 1977).

[5]George Comstock, *Effects of Television on Children: What is the Evidence?* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1975).

[6]George Gerbner, op. cit.

[7]Michael Rothenberg, "The Effects of Television Violence on Children and Youth," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 234, number 10 (December 8, 1975): 1043-1046.

[8]Leonard Eron, et. al., "How Learning Conditions in Early Childhood, Including Mass Media, Relate to Aggression in Late Adolescence," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 44, number 3 (1974) 412-423.

[9]Gerald Thain, "Audiences and Economics: Dollars and Sense," summary of the June 14, 1977 Session of the Children and Advertising Seminar Series, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C.: 3.

[10]Interview Report No. 49

[11]Interview Report No. 101

[12]Marjorie Steinberg, "The FCC As Fairy Godmother: Improving Commercial Television," *UCLA Law Review* 1290 (1974): 1332-1338.

[13]Second Interim Report Feedback No. 2

[14]Interview Report No. 35

[15]Project Correspondence No. 440

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